

Painted, spoken

edited by Richard Price

number 29

Painted, spoken is edited, typeset, and published by Richard Price. Please send an A5 stamped self-addressed envelope for a free copy (two first class stamps please) to 63 Artizan Court, Noel Park Road, London, N22 6ED

Painted, spoken's editorial policy is constituted in instalments by the contents of **Painted, spoken**

Earlier issues are available digitally at www.hydrohotel.net/mags.htm

Painted, spoken appears occasionally.

Other related projects are outlined at www.hydrohotel.net

Painted, spoken

edited by Richard Price

Painted, spoken number 29 2017

Is there an international poetry community in England?

Richard Price

I've been struck by the anger in the poetry community in England about the Brexit vote, if it is a community, and certainly that word begs further questions I haven't the space to tease out here.

In the aftermath, many poets who had voted Remain took to social media to assert their European nature, a complex composite which included asserting, in self-assessment of course, that they at least had the 'shared values' of the Continent and/or the European Union as well as cherishing, basically, a love for fellow Europeans and European places.

The tone was in sorrow sometimes but mostly in anger. I think these outbursts were understandable but ill-judged. I struggle with these layers of abstraction crystallised in rage and a romantic almost religious identification with a trading bloc and process of governance, elided with an unexamined concept of culture. I can see, in Scotland, how the EU was seen as a protecting force against an instrumentally hostile state south of its border, but I draw the line at the name-calling of Brexiteers as racist for voting Leave. If shipping out refugees, many of them who are grieving their children and family members killed in the voyage to Europe, shipping them the hell away from European territory in a bloodmoney deal with Turkey isn't racism at scale I don't what is. It's polite, it's organised, it's government-sponsored, but it's racism. And just look at all those white men in the European Parliament: doesn't Europe have any other ethnicities? – no wonder these vast racist acts just slide by unhindered.

Racism is a disgrace in the street and immediately Brexit for the first time since growing up in Scotland (where I encountered racism against a half-Indian friend every week of the year) I have seen racism as open as name-calling right outside my home. But it was always there in more organised ways and Remainers haven't exactly been at the forefront of combatting it. In my district of North London, one of the most Remain-voting constituencies in the UK, I knew (from the stats, and from friends of friends) it was happening well before that – the police harassment of black male kids starts at about age 12 and just keeps going, legitimised by Stop and Search. In fact this whole great Remain city does next to nothing about the organised racism – perhaps it is a kind of middle-class, those-in-charge, racism which doesn't count if you are, well, middle-class, or in charge. "Nothing to see here." Where has

anti-racist Remain passion been on its own doorstep? Nowhere. No, there is no moral high ground on race either side of this 'debate'.

But how has *poetry* in England got itself in this state. It's structural, systemic, and class is one of the vectors. Internationalism is hard work: translating contemporary poetry from European and other languages is skilful and it's time consuming and needs to create a market in what is already the micro-market of poetry itself. You'd expect university and arts council help for that, but, if they are interested at all (they are not usually), they are more interested in exporting English, in translation 'if need be', or talking to Anglophone cultures. Very little contemporary European work gets an audience in England. When you go to a poetry reading – and I have been to many over thirty years – it is extremely unusual to hear anyone reading in a European language with or without translation. My experience of going to readings in England set up by foreign language poets themselves is that virtually no-one from the poetry 'community' in England bothers to turn up; the English world seems fundamentally incurious or, worse, feels themselves 'superior' to European contemporary poetry. I have been ashamed of my adopted country many times on that count. As far as contemporary poetry is concerned, the avant-garde, the spoken word and the mainstream are fascinated, essentially exclusively, with American poetics, with a smattering of Northern Irish poetry from the late 20th century period, though that generation is dying now and can't make the gigs. There are nods to Europe and further afield *as an idea*, perhaps with a nostalgia for its now commodified historical Modernism, but there is very poor infrastructure for actually offering works that are not in English (of course this goes far wider than Europe, but this is the topic of our time). Internally, there is disproportionately white-to-white, middle-class to middle-class engagement, with proxy racism and classism operating through snobbery towards realistic modes and the spoken word.

There are exceptions. The journal *Modern Poetry in Translation*, whose recent issues have been frankly exhilarating, is utterly essential. It is not 'worthy', it is a miracle. The South Bank's Poetry International festival is another institution which suggests there is, just, hope for the poetry community in England. And there's the evidence of inspired translation projects such as Sophie Collins's *Currently & Emotion*, not to mention the Lusophone beacon of a magazine *Alba Londres* (see the recent Brazilian issue of contemporary women's poetry for starters). But there is far too little translation of contemporary work in reasonably-funded magazines and poetry presses, and far far too little effort put in to reviewing and bringing foreign language poets across to read live

(beyond the biennial Poetry International festival). Poets and, especially, poetry administrators and poetry lecturers shouting racist in the recent Brexit shenanigans should take a good hard look at how they have been operating in the past, and how they can genuinely engage with foreign language cultures overseas, whether or not we are in the European Union.

Some Notes Towards the Reading of Mário de Sá-Carneiro's 'Manucure' *Ricardo Marques*¹

Abstract: "Manucure", by Mário de Sá-Carneiro (1890-1916), is one of the most important vanguardist poems in Portuguese literature, alongside the odes of Fernando Pessoa as Álvaro de Campos and the manifesto-poems of Almada Negreiros. This article aims not only to discuss this long poem in the context of that vanguard, but also to place it in Sá-Carneiro's *oeuvre*, which was decisively influenced by the friendship, in the last four years of his short life, with Fernando Pessoa. Therefore the paper does not only consider the typographic elements of the poem, their purpose and meaning in the text, it also attempts a close reading of its poetic and stylistic aspects, the author's contact with other European vanguards and their influence on his work.

Keywords: Portuguese Modernism. Literary Magazines. Futurism. Typography.

For Alice Aires, the poet-manucure

"Big cities pausing for a moment in cafés,
In cafés, those oases of useless chatter
Where the sounds and gestures of the Useful
Crystallize and precipitate [...]"

Álvaro de Campos, "Ode Triunfal"²

'Manucure' – in English, 'Manicure' – was originally published in the second, final issue of *Orpheu* (July 1915), just on the occasion of the final journey of Mário de Sá Carneiro to Paris (July 11, 1915), "Manucure" is a text that can be considered absolutely central to the poetics of this author. Moreover, it is a poem that symbolizes the essential meeting of *compagnons de route* in Portuguese Modernism, that of the friendship between Fernando Pessoa and Sá-Carneiro, as well as the very important role that literary magazines have had in that same context.

¹ Ricardo Marques (Sintra, 1983-) is a poet and a critic and a freelance translator. He is currently researching the literary magazines of Portuguese Modernism, a post-doctoral project financed by FCT-MCTES (SFRH/BPD/101758/2014).

² Translation by Richard Zenith in Pessoa, Fernando, *Ode Triunfal/Triumphal Ode*, Lisboa, Clube do Autor, 2016. Bilingual edition with drawings by Pedro Sousa Pereira.

The truth is that this second issue of the magazine presents a series of formal modifications and content that make "Manucure" an even more curious example in its (almost) isolated futurism, despite Álvaro de Campos' 'Triumphal' and 'Maritime' odes, published in the *Orpheu's* first issue. We should also remember that *Orpheu* had been the magazine of the first modernist shock as far as Portuguese society was concerned (equivalent to *Blast* in the UK), so much so that the author of "Manucure" compiles reviews and numerous articles of the reaction in a small notebook, now deposited by the author's estate in the National Library in Lisbon.

Indeed, this is an unusual poem, unusually long in the poetry of Sá-Carneiro, and as such it would be useful in this reading to begin by breaking it down into parts. Ana Luísa Amaral, in her careful analysis of the poem (Amaral, 2002, 105-119), immediately denotes the presence of two main parts: firstly, one in which the poetic subject is contained in his very own post-symbolist style, and another, closer to a typically futurist poem. However, "Manucure" works effectively as a cohesive whole, in which these two parts are inseparable.

Finally, it would be interesting to incorporate this poem within the lexical field of Sá-Carneiro. If we have to select an element to merge this poetry, this element would be Air, which appears in the most varied forms in his poetic work – either by the use of a lexical *corpus* related to the element, or by the grammatical unfolding (morphology) of it. In fact, it is he who says to Pessoa, in a letter dated December 2, 1912:

"As for new ideas, interesting ones have very rarely appeared. I only intend one - I do not know if I have already told you, my friend. It is this: To tell the tragedy of air, the pains and joys of air - the air as being, as an individual. And it would be said of the giant trains that break it brutally, and of the white hands that caress it, of all the displacements, in short, that occur in the aerial ocean. This is a distant idea, very difficult to explain in a few words." (Sá-Carneiro, 2015, 46-47)

In "Manucure", 'Air' is the word that appears the most, alongside 'Beauty', which is another unavoidable word for this poet. We will see its relevance throughout this reading.

*

Let us begin at the beginning, where we are told: "In the sensation of polishing my nails, / Sudden inexplicable sensation of tenderness, / I all am included in Me – piously." Pessoa's literary theory of Sensationism, discussed extensively in the letters with Mário de Sá-Carneiro, is here poetically

realized.³ The poetic subject is not actually polishing his nails, but he is projecting himself into the sensation of doing it. In fact, this metaphor of the varnish, as Ana Luísa Amaral says, is the organizer of the poem, na idea that creates coherence within its various parts. The varnish as a façade of the exterior of the flesh is particularly pertinent in an author like Sá-Carneiro, in whom the “I-other” tension, via Arthur Rimbaud, finds a special relevance in these early stages of Portuguese Modernism. Other poems by the author of *Dispersão* (“Dispersion”) denote this same metaphor, allied to this particular theme.

Following this *incipit*, Sá Carneiro, in the well-known manner of other modernist poems, situates the poetic subject in a café, seated (verses 4-8) and the space around is briefly described, using the rhetorical presuppositions of the hypallage – or projection of characteristics of inert objects in a psychological characterization (as in “yellow yawns”) – and the synecdoche, describing a part of the coffee - the tables - for the totality of the space: “ungrateful and hard, cornered in their misfortune / loutish, quadrangular and free thinker. ”

The next verse, “Outside: a radiant day of May,” the shortest of the whole stanza, runs semantically and rhetorically as a hiatus, and constitutes a bridge between the ambience described earlier, in the interior and closed coffee, with the world outside (“Brutal, provincial and democratic day”), a day that “ will have singers of/ Among the friends with whom I sometimes wander - / brunettes, full of full-grown moustaches, who write [...]” in a group the subject does not take part in, since such a sunny day offends his extreme sensibility, that of “delicate, refined, slender, city-like eyes.” This passage is particularly important from the outset by the antithetical way in which the introductory elements of the poem are rendered: I vs. others, in an equation that could be summed up to a Dionysian and city-like predisposition as opposed to a more apollonian tone.

The “nail-polishing sensation” thus gains a new relevance when reaffirmed again in the first verse of the following stanza (v. 21), which leaves aside the concrete elements of the first group, to take off in a Symbolist mode (ie. the aesthetics of the Subtle and ‘Vague’, the word used in this

³ Sensationism is the last ‘ism’ created by Fernando Pessoa, c. 1915, this coming in the sequence of two others – Paulism and Intersectionism – created in the immediately preceding years (c.1913-14, 1914-15, respectively), and coming to function as an agglutinating ism of the latter. We are then able to say that, even if we are before a sensationist poem, its aesthetic and technical affiliation has more directly to do with Intersectionism – one of its elements – as we will see later. For this question, it is recommended to read Pessoa, Fernando, *Sensacionismo e outros ismos*, ed. Jerónimo Pizarro, Lisboa, INCM, 2009, as well as Cabral Martins, Fernando, *Introdução ao Estudo de Fernando Pessoa*, Lisboa, Assírio and Alvim, 2015, p. 97-106).

stanza) served by the frequent use of adjectives (and often triple, and therefore quite emphatic). In fact, if there were no more doubts about the location of the poem here, Sá-Carneiro uses the "Parisian" toponymic adjective to characterize this varnish with which he masks and isolates himself from the world. It is indeed a depersonalized, urban and modernist pose of a Sá-Carneiro that we can also read in "Caranguejola" or outlined in "Lamentable Crisis" ("Not to wander through Paris, as I do, aimlessly"), among countless other examples.⁴

On the other hand, all this metaphorical question of the varnish as a force of tension between I and other will return in a less subtle form in one of the last poems, dated February 1916, again saved for posterity because addressed by letter to Fernando Pessoa, a poem called, very blatantly, "Feminine." In this poem, the poetic subject repeatedly states, in an anaphora at every beginning of stanza, that "I wanted to be a woman," a condition that served a series of purposes, and which is summarized in the following climax: "I wanted to be a woman to excite whomever gazed at me/ I wanted to be a woman to be able to refuse/ [...] Oh, that you'd always forget the hours / polishing your nails - / The impatience of the blond morbidities / While in the mirror you composed yourself." If in the poem "Manucure" such depersonalizing tension lives off a temptation of gender, with a poetic subject making a metaphorical and feminine *manicure*, here the subtlety is most likely obliterated by the presentiment of the closeness of the end, in a "most irritating" poem, as he describes it to Pessoa.⁵

I think it is equally important to recall here the editorial situation of this poem, that is, its position as it was first printed, in the second issue of *Orpheu*. "Manucure" was preceded by another poem, "Elegy" ("Elegia"), constituting together a group curiously titled "Poems without support" ("Poemas sem suporte"). A brief analysis of "Elegia" reveals the post-symbolist author we know from other poems, showing his mastery of the synaesthetic quatrain, and in many ways this poem is an introduction to the great "semi-futurist" poem (as Pessoa characterized it) that is "Manucure". This poem is a true elegy to himself, to an inexorable time that makes him sink into the abyss of his self-reflection - "My boulevards of Europe and kisses / Where I was only a spectator ... / - What a freed slumber, my love; / What dust of gold, my

⁴ We recommend here the article by Ricardo Vasconcelos (2013), "Painting the Nails with a Parisian Polish Modern Dissemination and Central Redemption in the Poetry of Mário de Sá-Carneiro", where it is analysed the way a city like Paris has contributed to the definition of the fragmented modern identity in the poetry of Mário de Sá-Carneiro. In: www.brown.edu/Departments/Portuguese_Brazilian_Studies/ejph/pessoaplural/Issue4/PDF/I4A06.pdf.

⁵ In a letter dated February 16, 1916 (cf. Sá-Carneiro, 2015, 469-472).

desires.” Again, the final stanza of "Elegia" not only reaches the apotheosis of this sense of self-ignorance and depersonalization, but also seems to introduce the geographical-spatial situation of the beginning of "Manucure": "O my great-life coffees / With multicolored dancers ... / - Alas, my pains are no stronger / Than their dance interrupted ... ".

"TO FEEL EVERYTHING IN EVERY WAY"

As Paula Cristina Costa argues, it is in Mário de Sá-Carneiro's poetry that Intersectionism is mostly felt, especially with "Manucure",

"[...] a poem which, in exalting a cubist and futurist aesthetic, uses the successive and vertiginous interpenetration of planes, the mixture of sensations and different registers, ranging from the initial situation of this poet's coffee experience (much to the liking of Orpheu poets) who restrains his boredom while polishing his nails, to the bold and hilarious scenarios of the adventure of a new beauty that, in a mute apotheosis, sings the freedom of words and imagination "(Costa, 2008, 364)

Having introduced to us the space-time situation of this poem, the presence of Intersectionism is clear when it is said, in a summed up way, in the last lines of this part: "And everything, everything is thus conducted to me in space / through innumerable intersections of planes / Multiple, free, slippery." (vv. 39-41). Notice the triple adjectivation, characteristic of the author, but also the different tonalities of each of the adjectives, themselves "intersections" since they characterize these "planes" in a synonymous and polyhedral way, also acknowledging the cubist and expressionist aesthetics of the period. The next quatrain is also the epiphany of this intersection of planes where the poetic subject finds himself, without any time other than that of the text itself, already touched, as it turned out, in "Elegia": "There, in the great mirror of ghosts / That ripples and engulfs all my past, / My present collapses, / And my future is already dust "(vv. 42-45).

After a full line of dots, recurrent in Sá-Carneiro (along with the abundant use of reticence) which seems to point the passage towards another moment of the poem, the poetic subject deposes "then my files, / My scissors, my Polish godets, / The polishers of my sensation - / And I free my eyes to go mad with air. " As you can read, the register changes, and now it is within the air, that we read here as the atmosphere, that everything exists, and in which the subject is set. The intimate desire of the subject is then enunciated for the first time, in what the poem in the following two hundred verses will do - "Oh, to exhaust everything that sets in it [Air], / To traverse its Beauty – without support, alas!" Notice the initial capitals of the two words – Air and

Beauty. After this anxious design of the poem itself comes a great anaphoric enumeration ("That ...") of everything that exists in the air (v. 55-60). Locating himself now "by the stations and docks of embarkation", where "Everything [is] inserted in the Air" (v. 70), the subject utters, in the midst of a futuristic feeling, "-the futuristic beauty of commodities!" Then begins an extensive exemplification of ideas, to which I imbue here the first typographical passage of the poem:

FRAGIL! FRAGIL!

843 — AG LISBON

492 — WR MADRID

TYPOGRAPHY:

“Serene.
Opposite me sits a foreigner
Who unfolds the "Matin".
My eyes, already quiet of space,
There they, in glimpses of the characters,
Begin to vibrate
All the new typographic sensitivity.”⁶

We said at the outset that this is a poem that denotes an (almost) isolated futurism, due to the scant proliferation of the movement in Portugal. Patrícia da Silva MacNeill, in her article included in *Orpheu's* 100th anniversary book, *1915 – The Year of Orpheu*, where she compares the Portuguese magazine with *Blast*, highlighting this pertinent aesthetic proximity between the two publications:

In fact, the title in capital letters and the number appearing on the cover of the Portuguese magazine resemble the title in bold capitals of the cover of the first issue of Blast and the bold numbers of the first vorticist manifesto. [...] The capital letters reappear in

⁶ “Manucure”, vv. 170-176.

Sá-Carneiro

The typographic characters included in "Manucure" derive from a taste for experimentation *a la* Apollinaire, but certainly with the intention to be what Sá-Carneiro called a *blague*, a joke, aimed directly at the futurists. Indeed, in the celebrated letter of June 30, 1914, where the "Triumphal Ode" is extensively commented upon, Sá-Carneiro says that "Of all futurists things I know – your ode is not only the greatest – it is the most admirable thing." Markedly exaggerated or not, this suggests that his personal taste was not in line with the readings of the futurists. In fact, when he returns to Paris for the last time, a certain disdainful attitude of Sá-Carneiro (perhaps shared implicitly through the correspondence with Fernando Pessoa) is visible in the letter sent to him on August 13, 1915, after a visit to the Gallery of a futurist dealer, Sagod:

In the Sagod gallery, the futuristic cubist temple I told you about in one of my letters yesterday, I bought a volume: I Poeti Futuristi. It is an anthology covering Marinetti and many other poets: Mário Bétuda, Libero Altomare, etc, etc. On finishing reading the large tome (1 week) I'll send it to you. Already discovered some Fu fu ... cri-cri ... corcurucu ... Is-holá ..., etc. very recommendable. Let's see ...
[SÁ-CARNEIRO, 2015, p. 351]

The attitude, as one sees, varies between playful disdain and aesthetic admiration, as if Futurism were a school alien to himself. On the other hand, the penultimate typographic image of "Manucure" is very revealing of his knowledge of the artistic and literary Paris of that time, which is not limited to comparing to the Portuguese case, in an equation that resembles that of the futurist colleague, Pessoa's heteronym, Álvaro de Campos ("Newton's binomial theory is as beautiful as the Venus of Milo.") and most certainly, of Marinetti's formulation in the initial manifesto of Futurism ("A race car is more beautiful than the Victory of Samotrace") :

MARINETTI + PICASSO = PARIS < SANTA RITA PIN-
TOR + FERNANDO PESSOA
ALVARO DE CAMPOS
!!!!

In spite of the *blague*, Mário de Sá-Carneiro clearly reveals his knowledge on the object of literary parody, which further fuels this bifurcation between the ridicule (by way of *reductio ad absurdum*) of futurist literary principles, and its

experimental application in a committed and careful way, making it a creation of his own.

The final moment of the poem (vv. 218-235), preceding the last typographic collage, of which we shall speak later, seems to indicate a demarcation of this café context - the poetic subject finishes his description, at a futuristic pace, of everything that exists in the air (In one of the other typographic collages, he approaches the concept of a visual poem when he tells us, "It is in the air that everything is there!") He finally rises up from his seat in the café and arrives at the conclusion that everything he has just narrated, on an ideal of "pure" beauty, is "unattainable" - "never in my verses can I sing" (v.225), so he runs "to the street with leaps and screams", once again following a satirization of the stereotype of the futurist poet.⁷

"WE WERE LIKE A DIALOGUE IN A SOUL"

The "Triumphal Ode" of the futurist heteronym Álvaro de Campos and "Manucure" by Mário de Sá-Carneiro, thus appear to be two vertices of the same futuristic vanguard, two poems that express, in the first Portuguese modernism, the best that the avant-garde produced in Portuguese literature.

Although the writing time separates them in about a year - "Triumphal Ode" is written in June 1914, while "Manucure" is dated May 1915 - the dates of their publication makes a certain sense: Campos' poem is published in the first issue of *Orpheu*, while the poem by Sá Carneiro is published in the following issue, both poems having been read before their publication by the two friends. It is interesting to pick up just what says Sá-Carneiro about "Triumphal Ode", in a letter dated June 30, 1914, written to Pessoa:

*I have no doubt in assuring you, my Friend, you have just written
Futurism's masterpiece. Because although perhaps not pure, textbook*

⁷ Curiously, the posthumous printing itself was the subject of a great typographical error, due to a confusion that was perpetuated, as can be already seen in the volume *Poesias* (1946), of the set of complete works that Ática published (which was its first reprint, three decades after the author's death). This error is manifested by the artificial separation that is made in the middle of the poem (v. 123 - 124), in the word "APOTEOSE" (apotheosis), printed typographically. This is followed by a line of dots (following the style of Mário de Sá-Carneiro, not only for this poem but for others). The typographical confusion should be explained not only by this graphic separation that the author himself does, but by the fact that the continuation of the poem shows an explosion at the level of rhythm and meaning that will not have so much to do with what precedes it. On the other hand, the very word "Apotheosis" - title, moreover, of another poem by Sá Carneiro - is a dubious sign as to the conclusion, or not, of the poem itself. The error has been solved since the critical edition of Fernando Cabral Martins: *Poemas Completos*, Lisboa, Assírio and Alvim, 1996.

futurist, the whole ode is absolutely futuristic. [...] After writing this ode, my dear Fernando Pessoa, I believe that nothing more can be written to sing our time. (Sá-Carneiro, 2015, 223)

There is, therefore, a closeness between the two poems that goes not only through the theme, but also through the intersection of planes, and emphatic elements employed (eg, interjections - "Eia").

There is, in the first place, a pretence of place that has everything to do with the personal aesthetics itself. Engineer Álvaro de Campos affirms, through the post-textual elements in the end of the poem, that it had been written in London - what we know to be biographically impossible - showing a clearly Anglophone space, by reference to names, professions and (as in TS Eliot's *The Wasteland*, in the following decade, contemporary to the Week of Modern Art in Brazil in 1922). Sá-Carneiro, on the other hand, links the geographical-spatial situation of his poem to another important urban center of Modernism – Paris, a city that he actually knew and where he would die on April 26, 1916 – but where he is not when he writes “Manucure”. Vanguard is indeed the cosmopolitan art of cities, as Marinetti has expressed well in his manifestos – even though "the best way to travel is to feel", as Pessoa wrote and *lived*. And, as Sá-Carneiro confesses in another letter from Paris, after saying that he understands that Pessoa lives in his self-imposed exile in Lisbon, trying to "feel everything in every way", abandoning his body to *walk* around the world: "Listen: I love incomparably more Paris, I see it much more clearly and I understand it in far greater lucidity away from it, through Lisbon, than here, in its boulevards [...]" (Sá-Carneiro, 2015, p.236).

"ANOTHER WONDER IS THE END WITH ITS ONOMATOPOEIAS"

The conclusion is then a final homage-collage, both to Marinetti and to Campos, his *compagnon de route*. Inspired probably by the ode of his futurist colleague, Sá-Carneiro concludes his poem with a heap of onomatopoeia, in a true futurist performance on the part of the poetic subject, who thus goes out into the street and out from the poem: "Hilá! Hola Hola Eh! Eh! ... "(v. 236). Next, the author includes an indirect citation to Marinetti's poem "Zang Tumb Tumb," evoking repetitive machine sounds, *parole in libertà* without any apparent additional significance.

VIIIIIIIIIIIM . . .

BRÁ-ÔH . . . BRÁ-ÔH . . . BRÁ-ÔH ! . . .

FUTSCH ! FUTSCH ! . . .

ZING-TANG . . . ZING-TANG . . .

TANG . . . TANG . . . TANG . . .

PRÁ A K K ! . . .



A true Intersectional text, "Manucure" was a poem taken to a futurist extreme, through a *blague*, a jest, that became serious literature, inspired by a deep and fruitful aesthetic dialogue with Fernando Pessoa.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

AMARAL, Ana Luísa, “Manucure”. In: SILVESTRE, Osvaldo Manuel; SERRA, Pedro. (Orgs.). *Um Século de Ouro: Antologia Crítica da Poesia Portuguesa do Século XX*. Coimbra: Angelus Novus, 2002. p. 105-119. (*A Century of Gold: Critical Anthology of Portuguese Poetry of the 20th Century*)

CABRAL MARTINS, Fernando. *Introdução ao Estudo de Fernando Pessoa*. Lisboa: Assírio e Alvim, 2015. (*Introduction to the Study of Fernando Pessoa*)

COSTA, Paula Cristina, “Interseccionismo”, in Fernando Cabral Martins, *Dicionário de Fernando Pessoa e do modernismo português*. Lisboa, Ed. Caminho, 2008, pp. 363-366. (*Dictionary of Fernando Pessoa and Portuguese Modernism*).

MACNEILL, Patrícia. “Orpheu e Blast: Interseções do Modernismo Português e Inglês.” In: DIX, Steffen (Org.). *1915 – O Ano do Orpheu*, Lisboa: Tinta da China, 2015. p. 167-183. (*1915 - The Year of Orpheu*)

PESSOA, Fernando. *Sensacionismo e outros ismos*. Ed. Jerónimo Pizarro. Lisboa: INCM, 2009. (*Sensationism and other isms*)

_____, *Ode Triunfal/Triumphal Ode*, Lisboa, Clube do Autor, 2016. English trans. by Richard Zenith, with drawings by Pedro Sousa Pereira.

SÁ-CARNEIRO, Mário de, *Em Ouro e Alma – Correspondência com Fernando Pessoa*. Edição Jerónimo Pizarro e Ricardo Vasconcelos. Lisboa: Tinta da China, 2015. (*In Gold and Soul – Correspondence with Fernando Pessoa*).

_____. *Poemas Completos*. Ed. Fernando Cabral Martins. 3. ed. Lisboa: Assírio e Alvim, 2005. (*Complete poems*)

VASCONCELOS, Ricardo, “Painting the Nails with a Parisian Polish Modern Dissemination and Central Redemption in the Poetry of Mário de Sá-Carneiro.” *Pessoa Plural*, n. 4, 2013. In: <
https://www.brown.edu/Departments/Portuguese_Brazilian_Studies/ejph/pessoaplural/issues.html>. Accessed: 7 jul. de 2016.

from Quotidian Blues Ganna Shevchenko

Poems translated from the Russian and introduced by Anne Gutt

Ganna Shevchenko was born in 1975 in Yenakiyev, Donetsk region, Ukraine, an important regional centre of coal mining, metallurgy, chemical production and manufacturing. Her mother was Russian, her father Ukrainian. In 2005 she moved to Moscow, and now lives in Podolsk, Moscow Oblast. She works as an administrator at the A.N. Chekhov Library, Moscow.

Shevchenko is the author of a book of short prose *Cranes* (Moscow 2009), and two books of poetry, *Quotidian Blues* (Moscow 2012) and *The Inhabitant of the Crossroads* (Moscow 2015). *Quotidian Blues* was a finalist for the poetic prize “Moscow Account”. She won the international drama competition Free Theatre and was awarded the I. F. Annensky Literary Prize for Prose for her novel *Deep Miner* (2015). *Deep Miner* was also on the long list for the National Bestseller award. Her work regularly appears in literary journals in Russia.

In a review of *Quotidian Blues* the poet Arkady Shtypel described the quark-like strangeness and charm of the lyric poems. Ordinary situations become fantastic, as she meets with a dead cat, a dead poet (Charles Bukowski), her sister who tells her she doesn't exist, someone “wrapped in the Milky Way as if in a blanket”, a bird which “turned into something in bloom, like the word “flowerbed.” The style is precise, seemingly artless, the spirit is vital. She describes the “fairy-tale slag heap” outside her childhood bedroom window, but also the quotidian lives which are mundane to the point of bleakness, like Fillipovna's: “Because along came cold weather./ A head cold, loneliness, autumn,/ Because it will never happen, / there's no-one, nowhere, nothing.”

In her preface to the book, Marina Galina describes the dark poems as “dark like the Ukrainian night with shining, terrifying stars, glowing through “the cherry orchard close to the house”.” Galina is quoting Taras Shevchenko (1814-61), whose literary works formed the basis of modern Ukrainian literature.

In an interview for a Ukrainian magazine in 2015 Shevchenko was asked whether she was a Slavophile or a Westerner. She replied, “Actually I'm a transcendentalist. Like Henry Thoreau, who wrote “Life in the Woods”. If the hypothetical opportunity arose, I'd be living right now somewhere on the outskirts of civilisation, in a hut on chicken legs, backside to the city, facing the woods.”

I was given many things in childhood

I was given many things in childhood:
a notebook, felt-tip pens, a firm pillow,
a large bedroom, a low window,
Donetsk air, shavings of coal.

And when you sit on the window sill
the fairy-tale slag heaps come close,
I like the basaltic silence
and the dead weather-vane on the neighbour's roof.

But after midnight, through the rustle of feathergrass,
through the howling compressor's haze,
you can eavesdrop on the Earth's turning,
revolving with the gears of the pit face.

Clashing tongues

I so love fire...

Elena Shvarts

I so love fire,
that I'm jealous of him.
I rush to the door,
as soon as I hear
his approach
and cry out to him:

- Unfaithful one!
So where have you been?
Without you
I throw myself on the lightning belly first
and strike myself, like flint against another flint.

But he burns and looks at me.
And we are quiet,
just clashing tongues.

* * *

my expanse is quite small
it was recently born
I'm teaching it to talk

I say: *notebook*
it repeats: *wood*

I say: *flour*
it repeats: *wheat ear*

I say: *cosmos*
it repeats: *home*

soon my expanse will grow stronger
grow larger
and we'll speak the same tongue

from **The Syllabary** *Peter McCarey*

Cob

A dusty red and rusty
Dead 1930s Norton
In the cellar
By the wine butt
Next to me.

A motor pump to draw ad lib
On an old artesian well.

A Bluebottle throttles down on cobweb roads.

Kob was the one I picked on
When the others picked on me.
He was timid; I was the pariah
Collaborator clobbered in the pecking order
Egged on by a chicken-necked solicitor.

I didn't have much physical skill or
The toughness to match my temper
(Which I still have trouble mastering).
It's still a football match
With neither goal nor referee.

20.4.2

Curb your temper don't
Club it like a seal cub

21.4.2

HUB
OF HUBBLE
TO WHICH
EACH
STAR
S
P
O
K
E

21.3.2

A kettle was cursing on the hob
My brother was removing shin bark
From the hobnails on his football boots
In case the opposing centre-half
Demanded forensic tests.
Scrimshaw! he snapped. Boondoggle!
I was wrapped up in my hobby -
Another replica from
The Argyle Model Dockyard -
Look who's talking, I said,
And regretted it instantly.

24.3.2 Belvedere

Lob

The sun high
And a narrow arch
Beyond which
As in a pond
She watches
Apollo Belvedere
His bow and laurel sprig.

A face glimpsed in a crowd
Can get Bernini'd in me,
Figured like Chipangu
By cartographers to the pope.

Clear brow, and from the bridge
A steep, narrow ridge down
To two commas.
Straight, retentive mouth and eyes.

There
Is a face
That may become
A map on vellum and bone
Of forgotten countries.

21.7.2 Herb

Pungent blade
Of the bowed grass

19.2.2 “Buenos Aires: Ex-dictator on child-abduction charges”

Three drops of rain on my back
As I was throwing out the children’s cot
The playpen and the bags of clothes.
“Zero to six” it said, meaning months:
Years back then were unthinkable.

Three drops of rain on my back
From the storm on a campsite over the mountain
Connections we make, quick as thinking - Now
Twenty years after abduction at birth
Of babies from blindfolded prisoners

Three drops of rain on my back. I was tortured
With my little failure to love
While people like me were being dumped in the Atlantic
In case they upset the account I’m paid from -
This globe. Good old Henry Kissinger.

19.2.3 You’ll live, woman!

That your nerves no longer
Grove for yourself in the ground
Now your parents gently
Loosened your grip on the edge
Here I take back every
Word that was written on you
I undo the consolation,
Stifle the hurt.
I unravel death and history,
They my song.
You’re a girl of seventeen.
Your mum and dad open the door to greet you.

Thoughts On a Pebble, a Stone, a Shell, a Piece of Driftwood.
Peter Todd

.....
.....

Foreword

‘Here’s a tiny poem of the relentlessness and beauty of the natural, all around us.’ Ali Smith on Margaret Tait’s film *Aerial*.

.....

‘All my films poems paintings’

‘The film is constructed like a poem’

‘I had started a poem in words, and I tried to complete it on film’

Joanna Margaret Paul, Renate Sami, Margaret Tait

A small shell, a small round flattish stone, a triangular stone with markings. These are arranged and fixed on a piece of driftwood by Margaret Tait. Is this perhaps, a poem? Or, is it, also, additionally a poem?



Jeannette Muñoz writing of her series of films *envíos*, 'ENVÍOS are sequences, incidents, occurrences, fragments, moments, glimpses.' My memory of seeing her 16mm film *Envíos 26* last year, is of a film, but additionally, a poem. Although Jeannette has talked of them as letters, to and for a specific person.

'I think I follow emotions and thoughts rather than specific forms although some like film have been more to the fore,' I find myself writing of my experience in correspondence with Richard Price. That was last year, and now a few thoughts and references are written down. Which always changes things again.

Poetry existing intrinsically outside specific form, and the histories associated with them. So I wonder sometimes on my thinking on certain experiences of films, pictures, music, sculpture, at what point do I remember the experience of them, as poetry, poems, or additionally as poetry, poems. And how of course, how do we remember poems? Who hear's the words, and who sees the written text, and who sees images, and who feels an emotion, and who a combination of two, or all of these.

'Her film work is between categories' said Alex Pirie, Margaret Tait's husband, in an interview with Sarah Neely, drawing on a term from Morton Feldman. And Neely herself writes 'Tait's work was inspired by a great variety of artists, poets, and musicians'.

'the poetry that's inherent in what's being made'

wrote Margaret Tait.

.....
.....

Afterword

I had started a poem in words, and I tried to complete it on film; that was what I was doing.’ - Margaret Tait on *Colour Poems*.

‘The film is constructed like a poem. What would be the end of a line in a poem is here marked by 24 frames of black leader separating one, two or a cluster of images to give it a rhythmic structure.’ – Renate Sami on *A Year/Ein Jahr*.

‘All my films poems paintings play more or less between inner and outer events. (*Port Chalmers* on the one hand, to *Napkins* -) The attempt to work in several fields invokes criticism un-spoken and spoken. One may dissipate energy. But by constantly changing one’s lens, one sharpens awareness of the given medium; medium becomes subject’ Joanna Margaret Paul writes.

.....
.....

References

- Jeannette Muñoz. *ENVÍOS*. jeannettemunoz16mm.
Sarah Neely. *The Bits of Ourselves We Leave Behind*. MAP. 2016.
Sarah Neely. *Between Categories The Films of Margaret Tait: Portraits, Poetry, Sound, Place*. 2017.
Joanna Margaret Paul. *Joanna Paul: Shibusha*. *Cantrills Filmnotes*. Nos 47-48. August 1985. Quoted in *Through a Different Lens / Film Work* by Joanna Margaret Paul. Peter Todd. 2015.
Renate Sami. *A Year/Ein Jahr*. 2011.
Ali Smith. *The Margaret Tait Years. Subjects and Sequences: A Margaret Tait Reader*. 2004.
Margaret Tait. *A Few Notes About Film and Poetry, From Margaret Tait*. *FILM - POEM or POEM – FILM* doubles as issue 4 of *Poem Film Film Poem* June 1999.

The Man Who Broke The Bank *Bill Broady*

Horses for the final race were being led into the paddock but we did not want to see them. It was beginning to rain again so we went behind the grandstand where, in near silence, thousands of bodies were already milling about.

No-one could be bothered even to get a drink. We propped ourselves against one of the raised round plastic tables under a sign that read “BET RESPONSIBLY—WHEN THE FUN STOPS, YOU STOP!” As if losing or winning could ever be just “fun”! As if gambling was not a profound mystery beyond love, life, death or eternity itself!

Nobody had won—or even placed. Today had seen an auto-da-fe of the favourites—and also of the naps, the hot tips and the sure things. Even my inspired hunches had come to naught. Unbacked—unbackable!—outsiders were going through the card.

“It’s not fair,” said Zara at last.

“Nothing is ever fair,” I said but I didn’t really mean it. Even the tiny screens dotted around the concourse were bringing no relief: all over the country no-hopers were winning by ever-widening margins. As for the jumps, across the sea in Thurles, in three successive races odds-on favourites had fallen at the last.

Zara headed off to The Ladies. I hoped that she was thinking that if we could throw money away like this then we must have plenty left.

I had encountered her—a shimmering vision of platinum and silver—three hours ago in The Champagne Bar.

“Sssszaara”—She had breathed when I asked her name, ending on an interrogative note as if amazed that I had not known it already. It was undeniable that from the moment our eyes met we had understood each other all too well.

“I don’t want to be sexist,” said Dave, dolefully. “But that woman’s arse is unbelievable.”

In the previous race Dave’s Morgenstern had never left its stall, Tom’s Cocky Ollie had boxed itself in, while my Green Ruby was a hold-up horse that held and held until its trademark late surge down the wide outside took it from twenty-first to seventeenth. The oldest in the field had won, of course—from a bad draw and inexplicably high in the weights—at 66-1.

“It’s a pity we can’t bet on what comes last”, I had observed as it went past us going to post, blinkered and tongue-tied, frothing at the mouth and flashing its tail with a white-faced apprentice clinging to its back. “What sane person would back something named Dislocation?”

Ignoring the glares of the failing blondes around her, Zara had joined a queue that was coiling like an intestine round the concourse. Earlier, we had agreed that for a woman to turn blonde and for a man to grow a beard they should first have ticked all the boxes for beauty or for brains.

I knew exactly what she was going to do next. She checked her face in her pocket mirror, lightly slapped her cheeks, pulled down her skirt hem, then broke out of the ranks and shouldered her way into the Gents' Toilet.

As she entered, a huge, bald-headed man was coming out. He was wearing a shin-length grey plastic poncho with the hood halfway up as if it had snagged on something sharp projecting from the back of the head. As he advanced—singing—his large feet in their over-buffed Veldskoens were splayed at ten to two.

“As I walk along the Bois du Boulogne with a h' independent h' air
You can hear the girls declare ‘He must be a millionaire’...”

The distorting voice, veering from bass to counter-tenor, bounced off the metal-strutted roof and echoed along the concrete corridors and stairwells down to infinity.

We knew him. We went back a long way. He was the last person you would want to see under these—or indeed any—circumstances: an old drug buddy who had abandoned the opiates and friendship in his ruthless pursuit of knowledge and power.

His name had been Quentin—or “Q” or even “The Winged Serpent” after his—and our—favourite film but these days they mainly called him Quiz Kid.

He had always had a quick and enquiring mind and a nigh-photographic memory: one day it had dawned on him that he could make a living out of these. Competitions and feats of General Knowledge: “You don't pay no tax on prizes”, he had explained. He had a genius for sloganeering and captioning. Five years ago I had come across him in the Central Library, filling in the TLS crossword at lightning speed. I had heard that he had set himself to learn two hundred new facts every day. How they hated him in the pubs! On Quiz Nights he would loom out of the darkness, order a half of mild, then leave it untouched on his table until he had—as usual—carried off the pot. He had even made it on to TV and radio, coming third in “Brain of Britain”, winning £5000 on “Pointless”, £9000 on “The Chase” and even giving “The H'egg ‘Eads”—as he insisted on calling them—a good run for their money.

“You can see them sigh and wish to die
You can see them wink the other eye...”

He had seen us without looking—an old trick of his—and now ploughing towards us in a torpedo-straight line.

I was surprised to find him here. He had never been much cop at the horses. Although he had sedulously conned the form and knew everything about breeding and bloodlines he would always revert—disastrously—to portents and coincidences, names and jockeys' colours. He could never resist a grey and would sell the clothes he stood up in for anything wearing red blinkers.

“I'm the man who broke the bank at Monte Carlo!”

As we covered our ears he upended his travel-stained rucksack in front of us. Roll upon roll of banded red fifties cascaded across the table, to be followed by a bottle of spring water refilled with what looked like red antifreeze, a creased copy of *Compers' News Monthly* and a shrink-wrapped *Oxford Companion To Music*—evidently he had won the BBC Crossword yet again.

“Dislocation”, he chuckled.

“How much did you put on it?”

“A hundred—but I took the Tote odds: £72.63 to the pound. I've won on every race so far.”

“How did you pick it out?”

“Oh, I just asked myself which horse you lads were least likely to back.”

He had always been a bad loser but now he was evidently an even worse winner.

“What was that horrible song you were singing?”

“Don't you know it? Written for the great Charles Coburn by Frederick Gilbert—the biggest hit of 1893. That was the year when Yorkshire first won the County Championship, New Zealand granted female suffrage, Nansen went for the North Pole, the Independent Labour Party was founded and Tchaikovsky died.

“There are different opinions regarding the song's inspiration. Charles Deville Wells had managed to break the bank in 1891 but Joseph Hobson Jagger had got there first, eighteen years before.”

“Oh God”, I said. “Here we go.”

“I must say that personally I favour Jagger—and not just because he was a local man, born in Thornton and buried in Shelf. Either Wells had lucked out on the Martingale doubling-up system or he had bribed members of the casino staff, whereas our man had employed worthier and more imaginative methods.”

Zara came sashaying towards us. Although she was behind him, Q's whole body stiffened. His face grew even paler and his nostrils quivered as they tried to get her scent. Those dark eyes seemed to shrink deeper into their sockets as if they might refocus through the back of his head.

“A man in there just asked me to hold it for him.” Zara raised her right hand, setting the scarlet and black nails click-clacking like the claws of a crab. “So I obliged.” Her eyelashes—were there three sets or four?—were batting faster than the wings of the hummingbird.

“Jagger was not a toff”, Q continued. “Nor was he a master criminal. He had started out as an apprentice at Bottomley’s Clough Spinning Mills and worked his way up until he was Chief Engineer. There was nothing about spindles—their types and conditions, their speed and rotation rates—that he did not know.

“Had he been planning his great coup all along or did someone or something suddenly put it into his head? If a spindle on a roulette wheel was anything less than perfect, he had realized, the numbers generated would not be random. All you had to do was to watch the tables until any bias became apparent then place your bets accordingly.”

“He knows it all, he does.” Dave was whispering to Zara. “You can ask him anything about anything.”

“What’s the point?” Those daggered fingers rattled at her mobile phone. “When we’ve got Wikipedia?”

“And just who do you think it is that writes your Wikipedia?” Tom enquired.

“For five years Jagger and his six chosen collaborators led a Spartan existence. Everyone thought that they had got religion but although they went about singing hymns they were never seen to enter any church. They lived off weak tea and bread-and-scrape while their yards and patches were bursting with vegetable plants and berry bushes: although they kept hens they never cracked a single egg for themselves. They had forsworn tobacco and alcohol: their clothes were threadbare, their shoes were full of holes. Taking no holidays, working all the overtime that God sent—they were gradually building up their stake.”

Zara was circling, coming closer, examining him as if he might have been some curious exhibit in a dusty vitrine. Whenever she appeared in his field of vision, his eyes rolled upwards in an alarming fashion, like those of an El Greco saint. This, of course, only encouraged her: women know that when a man is ignoring them it can only mean that they’ve knocked him for six.

“At last, one summer morning in 1873, the seven men emerged from their homes in immaculate suits and ties. Jagger was even twirling a silver-topped cane. After giving in their notices they decamped—laden with trunks and suitcases—for Monte Carlo. The ticket clerk at Bradford Exchange station claimed that they were no longer speaking with Yorkshire accents, displaying instead the unmistakable airs, manners and bearing of the English upper class.”

It was curious that during this narration Q himself had lost all trace of his accent: not once had he chuckled, nor had he dropped or added a single “h”.

Now Zara, hands on hips, had planted herself right in front of him while Dave, as if working in tandem, approached from behind. After a day like this it was inevitable that he would have to start hitting someone.

Instead, much to my surprise, he bent at the knees to assume a weight-lifter’s crouch. Then his hands in their black fingerless gloves came creeping round Q’s waist until the fingers met and locked above the belly button. With a triumphant cry he sprang upwards, as if launching himself and his burden into the unsuspecting stratosphere. For a long moment they hung together in the air. Q did not seem in the least nonplussed: he smiled—no, he simpered—as if this was a common and even welcome occurrence. Then the ground shook as those four massive feet landed together.

“I knew it!” Dave released his grasp. “He’s light as a fucking feather!”

“That’s something I’ve realized”, said Q. “The more you learn the less you weigh. Facts are food without calories: these days I hardly ever eat at all. If we ever get to know everything there is to be knowed—which is unlikely, I admit—maybe we’ll be able to fly.”

Zara gave a little hop, as if assessing the possibilities. Those six-inch heels would be giving her a head start.

“For the first three weeks in the casino”, Q continued. “They all stood and watched. To allay suspicions, one of them would periodically stake and lose a small amount. Apart from nodding in passing they did not communicate until they were back in their rooms: they had trained themselves to hold each night’s sequence of numbers in their heads. During the days they would play tennis, fence or hire horses—somewhere along the way they had learned how to ride.

“Out of the dozen roulette tables, they finally established, Number Six favoured six adjacent slots on the wheel: 9, 22, 18, 29,7, 28.

“On July 7th Jagger began to play. He lost a little on Table Seven and then on Table Five before finding a seat at Table Six, right next to the croupier and the wheel.

“They had decided not to press too hard on this first night. Jagger walked away with over 50,000 francs but then returned to fritter away a quarter of it on the columns at the far end of the table. On the next day, however, as soon as the doors opened he returned to his original place and did not stir for eleven hours, hammering at the bank again and again.

“Now the management did become suspicious. Overnight they switched the wheel with that of Table Twelve and assigned a new roster of experienced croupiers. On that initial evening, however, Jagger had employed

a sharpened signet ring to make a tiny scratch on Number Six's wooden mounting and so could easily track it to its new location. This time he did not stop until he had topped two million francs when the casino, its vaults now emptied, had been forced to close. By this time, Jagger claimed, he could tell every number before the croupier called it, purely by the sound of the ivory ball striking the metal diamonds embedded in the wood.

"They did not re-open until long after the seven Yorkshiremen had returned home. All the wheels had been torn out and burnt, to be replaced by perfect models with spindles purchased—of course—from Bottomley's Clough Mills."

Q paused to take a fortifying slug of antifreeze.

"Go on, Zara", said Dave. "You could lift him with one hand."

She extended both her hands, fingers and thumbs pinching, as if about to take him by his prominent ears but then thought better of it. She shuddered—very slowly—from the top of her head all the way down to her toes, like a wet dog shaking itself dry.

"Oh, all right then", said Tom. He half-knelt in front of Q, like a courtly knight pledging fealty, then—having gripped him round the knees—staggered in a tight circle as if about to caber-toss him in the direction of the children's play area.

"That was great." Tom carefully returned Q to his position. "I felt like Hercules wrestling with that Giant—the one he could only kill by lifting him off the ground."

"Antaeus." Q raised his right arm to resume his oratorical pose.

"Fortunately my own powers are not derived from this earth."

"On his return Jagger bought himself a palatial mansion in Heaton Village. From this eminence he could observe the distant chimneys of his former workplace. His friends had all sold their fine clothes but he insisted on dressing in what he called "My Lucky Suit". When the shoes wore thin, however, he did revert to clogs. The others started up their own businesses and prospered but he remained aloof. He was as quiet and polite as ever but folk now felt uncomfortable in his presence. He was thinner and paler and he walked like a marionette with twisted or broken strings. Whenever he turned his head his whole body would move along with it and his eyes—so wide and round—were never seen to blink. They said he was like a second Lazarus, returned from the dead.

"Sometimes people would ask him about his famous adventure but he could only mutter distractedly about vibration levels...torque rate probabilities...wheel-spin divergences...angles of deflection..."

“After seven years he reapplied for his old job back at the mill but the Bottomleys only laughed and named a wholly unreasonable sum for which he could buy them out.”

Q paused and looked at me expectantly. Everyone was looking at me expectantly.

I really did not want to touch him: there was definitely something funny going on. Many people had said that Q was sinister—even downright evil—but I always used to defend him, claiming that he merely acted as a focal point for any occult forces in the vicinity...which was, I had to admit, not much of a defence at all.

I had never lifted a man before—only women, in a sort of scooping motion with one arm under the crook of their knees, the other round their shoulders, rather like Douglas Fairbanks or Errol Flynn unloading coal-sacks. I was terrified that I might get a hard-on--so my cock inevitably obliged. I told myself that this was solely attributable to Zara’s face peeping apprehensively over Q’s right shoulder.

All in all, I did not care to emulate either Dave or Tom. Suppose my unruly member was to slip up between his arse cheeks or rub against his own while I was looking into his eyes? Instead, I stood next to him, then leaned down and across, my left knee under his right as if for some judo throw, but instead held him in balance at the point of my hip before sort of canting him and tucking him under my arm.

He was indeed almost weightless and curiously stiff—like flat-pack cardboard, as if I could refold him, over and over, until he was the size of a playing card. As I turned, his torso made a rustling sound, as if that poncho had been stuffed with crumpled newspapers. The Velcro had split to reveal a white shirt-collar and a ragged bow-tie resembling a wall-brown butterfly. He still smelt faintly of Caporal tobacco, even though he had long ago quit smoking.

When I finally put him down, after our fourth stately revolution, he staggered as if we’d been on a lengthy dodgem ride. He might have fallen if Zara had not caught his arm.

“Now Jagger started drinking,” Q brandished the antifreeze. “Drifting from pub to pub, having one drink in each until he collapsed and the landlords would have him carried home. The last time he was seen in public was shortly before his death--during the great wave of mill strikes and lockouts, when he kept trying to force his way through the pickets and police lines to reach his beloved spindles in the far corner of the second floor weaving shed.

“You can see his monument outside Bethel Independent Church in Shelf. Although it is the biggest in the graveyard the inscription merely

records his dates—1830 to 1892—and makes no reference to the fact that here—right here, in this unremarkable spot—there lies the body of...The Man Who Broke The Bank At Monte Carlo.”

There was a smattering of applause from those passers-by who had stopped to watch and listen before mooching off for the final race.

“What do you fancy in this one?” asked Dave.

“Why, the winner, of course!” Q was shovelling the money back into his bag. “Blue Murder, number eight—but don’t waste your time. Whatever we do, it won’t make us h’any ‘appier!”

He took off at top speed. The crowds parted before him: he might not have weighed anything but he still had an intimidating air.

“As I walk along the Bois Du Boulogne...”

The great head tilted back as it resumed its song.

Zara smiled and then turned smartly to scurry away in his wake. She had not merely winked at me—I was pretty certain that she had winked...the other eye.

We watched them go. I was amused to see that her feet—even in those heels-- were also set at ten to two. She was still gaining on him when he disappeared.

Bill Broady is the author of the novels *Swimmer* and *Eternity is Only Temporary*.

Anne Gutt is a poet and artist.

Peter McCarey is the author of the study *MacDiarmid and the Russians* and many poetry collections, including *Collected Contraptions* (Carcanet). His collection of essays on poetry, *Find an Angel and Pick a Fight* is published by Molecular Press. He lives in Geneva.

Richardo Marques is a poet and an authority on Portuguese modernist little magazines.

Richard Price's latest collection is *Moon for Sale* (Carcanet).

Ganna Shevchenko is from Ukraine. Her *Quotidian Blues* was published in Moscow in 2012

Peter Todd's work includes films, curated and collaborative projects. He is Librarian for Research and Enquiries at the British Film Institute.

Painted, spoken

Bill Broady
Anne Gutt
Peter McCarey
Ricardo Marques
Richard Price
Ganna Shevchenko
Peter Todd

Almost Free (just send an A5 stamped addressed envelope – the “large” 2nd class stamp will cover postage)